WE CLAIM:

1.   A computer-implemented method for transferring data to, or from, an implanted medical device (IMD) programming unit via a server arrangement that is coupled to a network, comprising:

5   establishing communication connection between the server arrangement and the IMD programming unit; and

in response to data received at the server arrangement and destined for the IMD programming unit, intercepting data contaminants in the received data.

10   2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising, encrypting data exchanged between the IMD programming unit and the server arrangement.

3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising programming the IMD programming unit with default user preference data stored in the server arrangement.

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4.   The method of claim 2, wherein the step of establishing the communications connection includes establishing a wireless communication connection.

5.   The method of claim 2, further comprising denying unauthorized access to the IMD

20   programming unit via the server arrangement.

6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising programming the IMD programming unit with default user preference data.

25   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein establishing the communications connection includes establishing a wireless communication connection.

8.   The method of claim 1, and further comprising denying unauthorized access to the IMD programming unit via the server arrangement.

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9.   An apparatus for exchanging data with a plurality of implanted medical device (IMD) programming units via a server arrangement that is coupled to a network, comprising:

means for establishing communication connections between the server arrangement and the plurality of IMD programming units; and

5   means, responsive to data received at the server arrangement and destined for the IMD programming units, for intercepting data containing data contaminants.

10.   A system for programming implanted medical devices (IMDs), comprising:

an IMD programming unit to send data to, and retrieve data from, an IMD; and

10   a server arrangement communicatively coupled to the IMD programming unit, the server arrangement configured to provide an interface between the IMD programming unit and a network, and for data received via the network and destined for the IMD programming unit, the server arrangement further configured to intercept data contaminants included in the data.

15   11.   The system of claim 10, wherein the IMD programming unit and the server arrangement are further configured to exchange encrypted data.

12.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement includes a radio signal transceiver coupled to the IMD programming unit.

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13.   The system of claim 12, wherein the server arrangement is coupled to the IMD programming unit by an electrically conductive wire.

14.   The system of claim 13, wherein the server arrangement is coupled to the IMD programming 25   unit by an optical fiber.

15.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement is further configured to address the IMD programming unit using dynamic host Internet Protocol (IP) address assignments.

30   16.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement is further configured to deny unauthorized access to the IMD programming unit that is attempted over the network.

17.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement is coupled to multiple IMD programming units.

5   18.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement is coupled to an administrative user interface provided to configure at least one of the server arrangement and the IMD programming unit.

19.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement includes a storage device, and

10   wherein at least some of the data received via the network and destined for the IMD programming unit is stored in the storage device.

20.   The system of claim 10, wherein the server arrangement includes a storage device, wherein the IMD programming unit executes programmable instructions, and

15   wherein at least some of the programmable instructions executed by the IMD programming unit are stored in the storage device.